

very clear way about what kind of 21st century America we're going to have. And you and everybody you touch between now and Tuesday needs to show up.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:03 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Lori Deutsch, wife of Representative Peter Deutsch. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks at a Florida Democratic Party Dinner in Palm Beach**

*October 29, 1998*

**The President.** Thank you very much. The first thing I have to say is that Meyer Berman asked me to make a public service announcement—[*laughter*]*—that in the interest of enlightened citizenship he has for everyone here a copy of James Carville's latest book. [Laughter]*

Let me, first of all, say to Danny and to Eva, thank you for bringing us into your beautiful home for the wonderful dinner, for the music on the balcony. I thank all the people who served us tonight. I think they did a great job, and I think we ought to give them a round of applause.

I thank you and Meyer for cochairing this event. I thank all of you for coming, some of you my good friends from all around America. I'd like to say to all the public servants who are here a special word of appreciation. Florida has been, I think, particularly blessed to be well served. I want to thank Lawton Chiles for being a great United States Senator and a great Governor and a great partner for me—and a great friend.

Congressman Alcee Hastings, thank you for your support and your friendship. Congressman Peter Deutsch and Lori; Congressman Rob Wexler and his wife, Laurie, thank you for being here. Senator Daryl Jones and State Representative Elaine Bloom, thank you for being here. This State needs good leadership.

I'd like to also say, back when I decided to run for President in 1991—I think I mentioned Senator Graham—did I? Where is he? He's here somewhere. I want to tell you, Senator Graham and I used to be seat mates.

He taught me how to be a Governor. So I served with Bob Graham and Lawton Chiles, and I finally figured out how to do the job. And that's really a big reason I got to be President.

But I want to come back to 1991, but I want to say that I think both of them would say that we really enjoyed being Governors. And I was so afraid that Bob Graham wouldn't run for reelection this year. And he's so desperately needed in the Senate, because when you get to be the Governor of a place like Florida, and there is so much to be done, and it's so exciting, and it's so vibrant, and things are changing so fast, and then you go to Washington, and you see there is so much to be done—[*laughter*]*—and there are so many challenges, and it's so exciting, but nobody really wants to do it, or at least a lot of people would rather posture and position and sling words back and forth instead of actually rolling up their sleeves and doing it—that's why Lawton left the Senate and came back to Florida.*

And yet I don't think it is wrong to say that that's really what America needs at every level, which brings me back to Buddy and Ann. When I wanted to run for President in 1991, really only my wife and my mother thought I had a chance to win—[*laughter*]*—and apparently a few people in the Republican Party. [Laughter]* But I came down here, and I knew—actually the first big test of a Presidential campaign is now in Florida. It's the straw poll conducted at the December State convention in Florida. Elaine remembers all the sort of traipsing around. And there were people in Florida who started with me in 1991 who have been my friends ever since.

But Buddy MacKay stood up for me and stood by me and was with me every step of the way. Now, one of the things I think you want in a Governor is somebody with a lot of foresight. And it looks to me like he qualifies just on that ground alone. [*Laughter*] He joined my mother and my wife in thinking I had a chance to win, and I think that's a big quality. [*Laughter*]

But let me say in all seriousness, I know this man very, very well. I admire him and his wife very much. And I made a—I sometimes—I guess because I'm not running

again I can say things that are sort of impolitic, so I'll say something that's impolitic. It is not rational that he would be behind in the polls at all because he and Lawton Chiles have done a good job together as partners. And this is a better, stronger State than it was 8 years ago. The economy is stronger. The education initiatives are stronger. There's been an aggressive effort to grow the economy and preserve the environment. We're working together on the Everglades, trying to figure out what to do there to keep this thing going. And I can just go through issue after issue after issue.

And so I will ask—everybody I talk to about Buddy's race, because—my staff makes fun of me because I've just been obsessed with this—I don't have any hard feelings about Mr. Bush—I just want him to be elected Governor because I think he's got the best program and the best record, and I think he'll be the best Governor for Florida. That's what I think. I have no negative feelings.

And as I get older I'm sensitive to this. There's always going to be one candidate who will be younger and the other one will be a little older. And one candidate will have a little more money and the other one won't. And sometimes one candidate comes from a more famous family than the other one.

But let me ask you a question, all of you here that know Buddy MacKay. If he wins this election on Tuesday, do you have any doubt that he will be reelected 4 years from now? No, you don't, do you? Why? Because you know that he'd be a great Governor. Now, if you believe that, then you need to do what you can. You owe it to yourselves to go out and make sure he wins on Tuesday. You owe it to yourselves, to the future of this State. This is a very good man with an extraordinary record of service who will do this State proud. And you have big, big, big challenges here that require a serious, consistent, sustained response.

The education issue is one. Bob and Rob and Peter and I, we just worked like crazy, and we all stayed together, and we got enough money in this last budget to make a big downpayment on putting 100,000 more teachers in the schools, focused in the early grades so that when we get it all done we

can take the average class size nationwide down to 18 in the first three grades. Very important.

But we can give you all that money in Florida, and you won't be able to take advantage of it. Why? Because in places as big as Tampa and as small as Jupiter and all places in between, everybody is in trailers already. So where are you going to put the teachers? We have to build more classrooms.

So no matter what we do, even if in this election I get enough help because the voters elect a few more Democrats to give a little more balance in the Congress, which I hope they will, and we pass our class size initiative, it will support what Florida has to do, but it won't supplant it, because you're growing so fast. So it's a huge deal. This is a big issue. If one candidate is committed to smaller classes and more classrooms and more teachers and building up the system, and the other isn't, that's a massive issue.

I'll just give you one other issue. We've got 160 million Americans in managed care plans. And we were talking around our table tonight about John Glenn being 77 and how we're all living longer. I certainly hope that's true. And I said that I was just reading that if a person lives to be 65 in America, then a man at 65 has a life expectancy of 81; a woman has a life expectancy of 85. And the fastest growing group of people in America, percentage-wise, as all Floridians probably know, are people over 85. And we were talking about Strom Thurmond, who is 96, who came to see me last week. And we were joking about that. He wanted to jog with me, but I couldn't keep up with him. *[Laughter]*

This is a huge issue. And more and more senior care will be in managed care. Now, I supported the managed care movement when I ran for President, and I did when I presented health care plans to the Congress, because when I became President—a lot of people have forgotten this; you talked about inflation being down—health care costs were going up at 3 times the rate of inflation. It was unsustainable. It was going to bankrupt every business, every State government, the Federal budget. Lawton and Bob and I, we talked about it a lot. It was unsustainable. We had to do something to manage the system better, but no system can

be managed in a way that destroys the purpose for which it's set up in the first place.

And so we have this Patients' Bill of Rights in Washington. And you want to—Buddy wants to do a version of it here, which simply says some pretty basic things. If you're in a health care plan and your doctor says you need to see a specialist, you ought to be able to do it. If you're in a big city and you get in an accident, the ambulance ought to take you to the nearest emergency room, not one that's 20 miles away because it happens to be covered. If you're in the middle of a treatment, chemotherapy, or pregnancy, or any other sustained treatment, and your employer changes your health insurance provider, you ought to be able to keep that doctor until you finish your treatment. And, big issue, you should be able to keep your medical records private. That's all that does.

So if one party in Washington or in Florida is for it and the other is not, that's a huge difference that will affect the lives, the texture of life for millions and millions of people. This is not some casual passing thing. I could go on and on and on.

So I wanted to be here tonight because I am grateful to the Florida public servants who served with me, to Lawton Chiles and to Bob Graham, who I've known now for three decades, I guess, not for 30 years, but parts of three decades; to these two fine young Congressmen that I think have such a brilliant future; to my long-time friend, Congressman Hastings, who I'm trying to take dressing lessons from—[laughter]—I love that blue suit—and who has really been a champion for what is right in Washington in so many ways that I'm very grateful for. And I wanted to be here for Buddy MacKay.

I just want to say one last thing. So many of you have been very nice to me tonight. You've talked about what happened at the Wye Plantation, and then you said something about me going without sleep. That's true. I was up for 39 hours at the end of those peace talks, and I never did that in college. [Laughter] And now I know why—[laughter]—because I'm not over it yet.

But I would like to—a lot of you here have been heavily involved in Israel and many of you even with the Arabs and the Middle East, and you have a vested—you've got a

real oar in the water. You have very sophisticated knowledge of this. But what I want to ask is, just as Americans, why did you and why did other people feel so good when that was announced? What was it about that that everybody feel so good?

**Audience member.** Hope.

**The President.** Hope, yes. You said, oh, my God, here are these two guys; they've been dumping all over each other. They all have got problems at home; they're going to get grief because they did this. Both of them are going to be in greater—everybody who understands it knows that they're both in greater physical danger because they made this deal. And here are these guys that can hardly bear to speak to each other, and they get up on this high dive, and they hold hands, and they jump off together. And it made us all feel more alive. We felt bigger—the possibility that things can change, and the possibility that people can be reconciled to one another after all the scars and all the injuries and all the wrongdoing and all the disappointments, that there can be both progress and community.

Why did we all love it when old John Glenn went up in the spaceship today? Because it was about possibility. It was about, oh, my God, the guy's 77 years old, and he still looks good in his clothes. [Laughter] He can lift weights, and he's sharp as a tack, and he's doing great. Gosh, maybe I can be like that. Maybe we can all change the way we are. Maybe we can push back the frontiers of possibility not just in space but here on Earth. And so it made us feel bigger.

What I'm trying to say to you is I've done nearly everything—or at least made real progress on nearly everything I told the American people I'd try to do when I ran in 1992. We haven't made health care available and affordable for all Americans yet. Every other major commitment I made, we've made real progress on. But the one thing I have not been able to do is to make Washington a less partisan, less negative place. I have—Lord knows, I have tried.

And one of the things that I hope will happen in this election season is that people will say, "Never mind who's got the most money on the ads and all this; I am going to choose a course for the future of my country that

reflects the same aspirations and the same values that I felt when I was cheering for Netanyahu and Arafat, when I was cheering for John Glenn. But I believe that what that represents ought to be something that is a part of my everyday life as an American, as a Floridian, as a citizen, in my business, in my work, in my family, in everything, but especially in our public life." That is what I want. And I am trying so hard to make that argument to the American people.

And when you get right down to it, the investment you made tonight is going to give the people here in Florida who are working for our candidates and our causes and our issues the power to get more people to do that on Tuesday.

I told everybody, if you like what I did in the Middle East peace talks, keep in mind I am a hired hand. I was elected to do that by you. Everything that I did, if I had any role in it that was positive, I did through the direct authority of the people of the United States who voted on election day in 1996.

If you liked what happened when John Glenn went up in space, keep in mind that is the product of a democratic government. That shuttle could not have gone up today but for the votes in the Congress to keep the space program alive and to ratify its direction, which means that, in a profound sense, if you supported someone who supported the space program, your hand was on John Glenn's shoulder when he lifted off today.

If you voted for me and the direction I wanted to take in the Middle East peace, you were standing there when we announced the agreement at Wye. You have to see it this way.

I do not want to finish my term without knowing that we have not only helped the American people to become more reconciled to one another across racial and other lines that divide us but also without knowing that we have made our best efforts to have our political leaders in Washington behave the way most citizens behave in America every day. The only way you can get that done is to show up and elect people like Buddy MacKay next Tuesday.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Meyer Berman, sole proprietor, M.A. Berman & Co.; dinner hosts Danny and Eva Abraham; Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; Florida State Senator Daryl Jones; Representative Peter Deutsch's wife, Lori; gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay of Florida and his wife, Ann; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

## **Remarks on Departure for New York City and an Exchange With Reporters**

*October 30, 1998*

### **National and International Economy**

**The President.** Good morning. I want to say a few words today about the growth of our economy and important new steps we're taking to strengthen that growth as we move toward the new century. Six years ago, our economy lagged behind the rest of the world, so we changed course, with a new strategy for economic growth founded on fiscal discipline and lower interest rates. It has worked.

It has helped to produce an American economic renaissance with low inflation, low unemployment, low welfare rolls, rising wages, the highest rate of homeownership in history, the first balanced budget since Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon, and the smallest Federal Government since John Glenn orbited the Earth.

This morning's economic report shows that our economy is continuing to grow in a strong manner, at a solid 3.3 percent. It is continuing to expand opportunity, to create wealth, to lift the hopes of working families. In the face of worldwide economic turmoil, our economy remains the strongest in a generation. But to keep it going we must stay with the strategy that created the conditions of this enduring economic expansion, and we must address the challenges of the global economy. I'd like to say a word about both.

First, we must maintain our fiscal discipline. I have insisted we preserve our hard-won surplus until a plan is in place to strengthen Social Security. We stopped the Republican majority in the House from squandering the surplus in an election-year